



**Town of Brookline**  
**Selectmen's Committee on Parking**  
**(Brookline Parking Committee)**

**FINAL REPORT**

**April 27, 2010**

This report was presented to the Brookline Parking Committee at its final meeting on April 12, 2010. The report was accepted as amended with the following vote:

Yes: Jesse Mermell, Bill Schwartz, Sean Lynn-Jones, Linda Pehlke, Werner Lohe, Hugh Mattison, Al Raine, Hsiu-Lan Chang, Jerry Kampler

No: None

Abstain: Myra Trachtenberg

Absent: Peter Furth, Steve Heikin, Paul Saner, Mike Sandman, and Capt. Michael Gropman

This document contains the changes discussed at that meeting.

## When it comes to Parking, “You Are Also Right”

**From the opening scene of *Fiddler on the Roof***

**First Man:** You should know about events in the outside world!

**Second Man:** Why should I break my head about the outside world? Let the outside world break its own head.

**Rabbi:** He is right.

**Second Man:** As the Good Book says, "If you spit in the air, it lands in your face."

**First Man:** Nonsense. You can't close your eyes to what's happening in the world.

**Rabbi:** He is right.

**Third Man:** He's right and he's right? They can't both be right.

**Rabbi:** You know, you are also right.

As retold by Al-Raine at the Brookline Parking Forum, June 2008

# **Brookline Parking Committee Final Report**

## **Table of Contents**

### **Executive Summary**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Committee Statement	1
1.2	Committee Purpose	1
1.3	Membership	1
1.4	Context for the BPC	1
1.5	Brookline's Transportation Environment	4
1.6	Brookline's Environmental Initiatives	5
1.7	<i>The High Cost of Free Parking</i>	5
1.8	Parking Finances	6
1.9	Context for Parking Reform	6
1.10	Meetings and Work Program	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Public Parking Resources</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Permit Programs	9
2.2	Metered Parking	10
2.1	Wayfinding Signs	12
2.2	Facility Signs	14
2.3	Addressing Overlapping Uses of Public Parking	14
2.4	Parking Meters and Payment Options	15
2.5	Resource Management	16
2.6	Tools to Improve Efficiency of Metered Spaces	17
2.7	Parking Near the Longwood Medical Area	19
2.8	Enforcement	19
2.9	Administration, Governance, and Public Input	20
<b>3</b>	<b>Existing Private Parking Resources</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1	Off-Street Residential Parking Supply and Demand	23
3.2	Off-Street Commercial Parking Supply and Demand	26
3.3	Comparisons with Peer Communities	27
3.4	Parking For New Businesses	28
3.5	Overall Findings for Commercial Parking Requirements	28
3.6	Brookline Parking Exchange	29
<b>4</b>	<b>Future Parking Requirements</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1	Changes to Brookline's Off-Street Parking Requirements	31
4.2	Proposed Process for Determining Commercial Parking Requirements	31
4.3	Shared Parking Strategies	31
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>33</b>

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A	Motions Adopted by Brookline Parking Committee, October 20, 2010
Attachment B	Public Parking Supply in Brookline
Attachment C	Appropriate Residential Parking Rates in Brookline: What Does the Data Tell Us? By Linda Olson Pehlke
Attachment D	Existing Parking Rate in Coolidge Corner, (+Methodology and Spreadsheet)
Attachment E	Number of Parking Spaces Required for Existing Coolidge Corner Commercial Properties under Current Zoning (+ CC Parking Space Estimate Spreadsheet)
Attachment F	Brookline Zoning Bylaw (Article VI – Vehicular Service Uses Requirements)
Attachment G	Draft Transit Zoning Overlay District and Map
Attachment H	Proposed Commercial Parking Review Methodology
Attachment I	Parking Requirements in Brookline: A Preliminary Analysis by Sean Lynn-Jones

## **Executive Summary**

The Brookline Board of Selectmen convened the Brookline Parking Committee (BPC) in 2008 “in order to maximize the effective and efficient use of Brookline’s on- and off-street parking resources for the mutual benefit of local businesses, residents, and visitors. This committee was charged with conducting a comprehensive review of policies and regulations related to parking (other than the year-round ban on overnight on-street parking).”

The BPC made numerous findings and developed more than 20 recommendations for implementation by various Boards, Committees, and Town Meeting. These recommendations fall into two broad categories, 1) management of existing parking resources, and 2) parking requirements for new development. The following are excerpts of the recommendations. See the full report for detailed analyses and complete recommendations.

### **Recommendations to Improve the Management of Parking Resources**

#### **Make it Easier for Employees to Purchase Parking Permits**

- Offer employers the option to purchase on-street commercial parking permits on a quarterly basis with quarterly pricing corresponding to 25 percent of the annual cost.

#### **Expand Town-Owned Overnight Parking**

- Consider renting additional overnight rental parking spaces in the Beacon Street median.

#### **Improve Wayfinding and Signs for Public Parking Areas**

- Install consistent wayfinding signs to direct motorists to public parking facilities.
- Implement simple, appealing, and consistent facility graphics for parking lots.

#### **Better Utilize Existing Parking Lots**

- Increase utilization of public parking lots at times when doing so would not adversely impact other users of the lots.
- Work with private property owners to maximize the use of private lots open to public use.

#### **Upgrade Meters and Payment System**

- Prioritize the installation of multispace parking meters in certain on-street parking areas of Brookline where parking demand is high and more space turnover is sought.
- Replace meters according to the program outlined in the FY 2011 Financial Plan.
- Ensure that the new parking card system is both user-friendly and does not have built-in obsolescence with regards to technology.

#### **Extend Meter Hours of Operation**

- Extend hours of operation for parking meters beyond 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in areas where evening parking demand is highest.
- Enforce parking regulations during all time periods when meters are in effect

### **Adjust Parking Time Limits**

- Modify time limits in some commercial areas to shorter than two hours (where demand is highest) and create even shorter time limits in quick turnover locations.
- Modify time limits in other areas to longer than two hours, where appropriate.

### **Adjust Meter Prices**

- Through the Board of Selectmen, establish a ceiling price for hourly parking rates above the current \$0.75 per hour rate, which would permit the Transportation Board to adjust hourly parking rates up or down beneath the ceiling price.

### **Use Some Revenues from Parking to Improve Commercial Areas**

- The Town should propose options to use some portion of any increased meter revenues to improve commercial areas.

### **Continue to Monitor LMA Parking Conditions**

- The Brookline Police and Transportation Division should continue to monitor parking conditions on the streets near the LMA and report changes to the Transportation Board

### **Notify Businesses of Potential Changes Impacting Commercial Area Parking**

- Notify commercial property owners, commercial tenants, and merchants associations in advance of [relevant] proposed actions under consideration.

## **Recommendations to Improve the Management of Parking Resources**

### **Reduce Residential Off-Street Parking Requirements**

- Reduce the off-street parking requirements for residential land uses, particularly near transit and in areas served by car sharing organizations, provided that neighborhood concerns are taken into account. The BPC does not recommend a specific number or ratio of parking spaces per unit.
- The Zoning Bylaw Committee (ZBC) should consider a reduction of minimum parking requirements in M, T, & F districts within proximity to rail stops and bus stops.

### **Modify Permit Process for New Businesses in Existing Buildings**

- The ZBC should consider reducing or eliminating altogether the parking requirements for changes in use of existing commercial spaces
- As a condition of obtaining a permit, new businesses should be required to purchase subsidized T passes or employee parking permits.

### **Implement a Brookline Parking Exchange**

- Establish an online “Exchange” to list parking needs and parking availability, hosted within the Transportation Division’s page of the town’s website.

### **Modify Commercial Parking Requirements**

- Modify the process and requirements for commercial parking. This would be applicable both to reuse of existing commercial land uses and redevelopment or development projects.
- Increase the bicycle parking requirements in the existing zoning bylaw.
- Although the Zoning Bylaw currently allows for reduced parking for mixed-use developments, the ZBC should consider expanding the language to allow for new uses with reduced parking rates that could take advantage of shared use parking resources of nearby properties.

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Committee Statement**

The Brookline Parking Committee, having completed an 18-month process that included data gathering and analysis, stakeholder meetings and 15 full committee meetings, recommends that a series of changes be made to the management of the public parking supply and the regulation of private parking. These include changing the hours of operation of parking meters, adjusting meter rates to reflect demand, and expanding enforcement activities as appropriate. The BPC also recommends reducing the minimum parking requirements for multi-family residential and commercial development projects. A site-sensitive metric for determining appropriate commercial parking requirements is recommended, as are less onerous parking requirements for the reuse of existing commercial buildings. By more efficiently managing the existing parking supply, we can sustainably support our business community and improve the quality of our community.

## **1.2 Committee Purpose**

The Brookline Board of Selectmen convened the Brookline Parking Committee (BPC) in 2008 “in order to maximize the effective and efficient use of Brookline’s on- and off-street parking resources for the mutual benefit of local businesses, residents, and visitors. This committee was charged with conducting a comprehensive review of policies and regulations related to parking (other than the year-round ban on overnight on-street parking).”

## **1.3 Membership**

Selectman Jesse Mermell and Transportation Board member Bill Schwartz served as Co-Chairmen. Other members and their affiliations included Michael Sandman (Transportation Board), Sean Lynn-Jones, (Advisory Committee), Myra Trachtenberg\* and Paul Saner\* (Zoning By-Law Committee), Linda Olson Pehlke\* (Zoning By-Law Committee and Climate Action Committee), Jerry Kampler (Planning Board), Al Raine (Economic Development Advisory Board), Steve Heikin (Housing Advisory Board), Werner Lohe\* (Conservation Commission), Hsiu-Lan Chang (business community), Captain Michael Gropman (Police Department), and Hugh Mattison\* and Peter Furth, (at-large members). Staff included Todd Kirrane (DPW Transportation Division Administrator), Kara Brewton (Planning – Economic Development), and Jeff Levine (Planning Director). Town Meeting Members are indicated with an asterisk.

## **1.4 Context for the BPC**

Parking in Brookline has long been the subject of considerable discussion. To paraphrase the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*, when it comes to parking, “you are also right.” Opinions vary about whether the parking supply is sufficient, how well is it is managed, and whether we are requiring too many or too few spaces for new developments. Much work has been done to improve the public parking system in the town, particularly related to residential on-street parking during the day, daytime on-street parking for employees, and parking in school zones. The findings and recommendations contained in this report, if implemented will help build upon and continue the progress of the past few years.

In establishing the committee, the Selectmen asked for a comprehensive review of what can be done to improve parking further, particularly in the context of the following events and activities that have taken place since 2000. These include changes to the residential parking requirements in 2000, the recommendations for both residential and commercial parking



requirements of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the 2005 Coolidge Corner District Plan, the redevelopment of Two Brookline Place, and the passage at Spring 2008 Town Meeting of Article 15, which implemented transit oriented parking reductions for that site. Each of these is discussed briefly below with additional details provided in subsequent chapters.

### **Residential Parking Requirements Changed by Town Meeting (2000)**

In 2000, Town Meeting passed changes to the Zoning Bylaw that increased off-street parking requirements for residential uses (Article 12), with particular emphasis on multi-unit developments of 1, 2- and 3-bedroom units. This change was implemented despite being opposed by the Board of Selectmen, Advisory Committee and Planning Board. While changes were made to residential parking requirements for residential units of varying sizes, the focus of the change was on multi-unit developments. Table 1 illustrates the impact of the change for a 15-unit development composed of five 1-bedroom units, five 2-bedroom units and five 3-bedroom units. As illustrated in the example, the changes to the zoning bylaw increased the parking requirements by seven spaces.

**Table 1 – Impact of 2000 Residential Zoning Change Applied to a 15-unit Building  
(Five 1-bedroom units, Five 2-bedroom units, and Five 3-bedroom units)**

<b>Rate</b>	<b>1 BR</b>	<b>2 BR</b>	<b>3 BR</b>	<b>Spaces Required</b>
Pre-2000 rate per unit	1.5	1.7	1.7	25
Current rate per unit	2.0	2.0	2.3	32
Increase in spaces required				<b>7</b>

Chapter 3 presents a more comprehensive discussion of parking requirements.

### **Brookline Comprehensive Plan (2005)**

The Brookline Comprehensive Plan was published in 2005. One of the key recommendations to “enhance livability” was to develop district plans, including one for Coolidge Corner, described below. In the context of future development of the Route Nine corridor, the Plan also recommended that “an adjustment to parking standards should be considered to provide an incentive for developers and employers to focus on attracting transit-oriented users and reduce traffic impacts associated with development.”

### **Coolidge Corner District Plan Transportation Study (2007)**

The town engaged a consultant to study parking as an outgrowth of the Coolidge Corner District Plan. Completed in 2007, the study identified a number of issues and opportunities for improving parking. The study also analyzed parking for four potential development parcels (10 Waldo Street, Centre Street East parking lot, Centre Street West parking lot, and the Post Office site on Beacon Street). In each case, the analysis compared parking requirements recommended by the consultants in the District Plan, those from the Institute of Transportation Engineers *Parking Generation* report, and the requirements of Cities of Cambridge and Somerville. Table 2 compares the total parking requirements for each of the potential development sites and options. As shown, in each case the minimum parking requirements under Brookline zoning are higher than what was recommended by the District Plan by between 19 percent and 35 percent and by *Parking Generation* by between 18 percent and 33 percent. Brookline’s parking requirements also exceed the comparable requirements for Cambridge (Central Square) and Somerville (Davis Square). This disparity is primarily driven by the residential parking requirements for these mixed-use development projects.

**Table 2 – Coolidge Corner District Plan Parking Requirement Comparisons**

<b>Development Site</b>	<b>Minimum Parking Space Requirements</b>				
	<b>Brookline Zoning</b>	<b>District Study</b>	<b>ITE</b>	<b>Cambridge<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Somerville<sup>2</sup></b>
Post Office (Option 1)	97	72	82	55	62
Post Office (Option 2)	168	128	126	94	122
10 Waldo St. (Option 2)	93	72	76	54	65
Centre St. East (Option 2)	212	178	166	141	162

1-Parking maximums rather than minimums were used for the retail and office component under the Cambridge zoning bylaw for Central Square.

2-20% reduction applied for proximity to T for non-residential uses under the Somerville zoning bylaw for Davis Square.

Given that Coolidge Corner has outstanding transit service, a relatively low car ownership rate, and very high pedestrian activity, some have argued that the parking requirements in Brookline should be lowered. Again, Chapter 3 elaborates on this topic.

### **Two Brookline Place Development (2008)**

In Spring 2008, Children's Hospital formally submitted plans to develop Two Brookline Place as an office (medical and general office) and retail building totaling 252 thousand square feet (ksf). The plans included 624 proposed parking spaces, which would have met the required zoning prior to Town Meeting 2008, and made it the largest parking facility in the town.<sup>1</sup> This development is immediately adjacent to the Brookline Village MBTA Green Line station. In addition to the Green Line, this station is served by the MBTA Bus Routes 60, 65, and 66, several private shuttle buses, and taxicabs. The nearby "E" Green line also serves the site and Bus Route 39 on Huntington Avenue.

The zoning by-law then in effect for parking was designed without any consideration for proximity to public transportation, walking trips, or shared use of the parking. The parking requirements for Brookline Village were the same as for a development in South Brookline, which is served by one bus route (Route 51). The town was faced with the dilemma of how to accommodate a large development project in a transit-served neighborhood and manage its potential impacts on traffic and public services.

In 2008, Town Meeting rezoned this area to reduce the minimum parking required to 549 spaces, with an option by special permit to reduce the required parking down to 412 spaces. Children's Hospital agreed to reduce the parking proposed to 586 spaces, as recommended by its parking consultant.

The consultant's shared-parking analysis resulted in a recommended overall parking ratio of 2.3 spaces per ksf. The Zoning Board of Appeals, based on this parking analysis, ruled to allow 586 parking spaces, a reduction of 38 spaces from the proponent's original request. The concept of adjusting parking requirements for transit-oriented development (TOD) as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan was introduced and debated at Town Meeting. In the end, the TOD concept was only modestly accepted.

### **Parking Forum (2008)**

On June 9, 2008, approximately 75 citizens and officials gathered in the temporary Town Hall for a Parking Forum. The slide presentation from that evening is available via the town's [website](#). In addition, a video presentation is available from [Brookline Access](#)

<sup>1</sup> At present, the largest single parking facility is at One Brookline Place (377 spaces).

[Television](#). Presenters at the forum included Al Raine, transportation consultant Jason Schreiber, and Bill Schwartz. Mr. Raine talked about transit-oriented development and cited the advantages that Brookline offers in terms of livability, particularly the ability to live in Brookline without having to own a car or to own a second car. Mr. Schreiber described the parking reform movement, focusing on the inconsistencies of land-use-based parking requirements that are not based on actual parking demand, the widespread subsidy given to parking and the transference of its cost to consumers and tax payers, the low price of curbside parking in comparison to its value, and the inefficiency of having to drive and park at multiple locations when running errands. He introduced the concept of Park Once, the idea that one can leave one's car in a single location and walk to adjacent destinations without having to drive. Mr. Schwartz discussed the need to better manage public parking, to have appropriate time limits and consistent enforcement, and to look at the public parking supply as a valuable resource for both economic activity and municipal revenue.

### **Car Sharing Organizations (2009)**

Cambridge-based Zipcar introduced the first economically viable model of regionally based car sharing in 2000. Brookline was an early adopter of the concept, allocating an increasing amount of public parking spaces for free. Zipcar secured spaces in several private lots throughout Brookline over the next ten years. At present, Zipcar has 78 vehicles in 34 locations in both public and private parking lots and more than 3,300 members.

During the course of the work of the BPC, the manner in which Zipcar vehicles were regulated and overseen by the town came into question. The Board of Selectmen, Advisory Committee, and BPC among others) discussed the topic at length. Ultimately, a Warrant Article that established a permitting framework allowing these commercial vehicles in residential neighborhoods was overwhelmingly passed at the Fall 2009 Town Meeting.

## **1.5 Brookline's Transportation Environment**

### **The Role of the Automobile**

For Brookline residents, owning and using a car is for some, a necessity, for others an essential part of daily life and for still others a car is an occasional convenience or something they do not need at all. Some own their own vehicles while others take advantage of car rental companies or CSOs. While some residents eligible to drive do not have licenses, a majority of us drive for some trip purposes. Thus, the automobile should be understood as part of a multi-modal transportation system that includes private vehicles, taxicabs, public transportation, bicycling, and walking.

### **Viable and Essential Alternatives to the Automobile**

Brookline is one of Boston's original "streetcar suburbs," a term made famous by Sam Bass Warner in his 1962 book of that name. In the late 19th and early 20th century, much of Brookline's growth occurred along the streetcar lines that served the town, two of which survive as the "B" and "C" branches of the MBTA Green Line on Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street. The Boston and Albany railroad also connected Brookline to Boston. Its right of way is now the "D" branch of the Green Line. In addition to these three Green Line Branches, MBTA Bus Routes 51, 60, 65, and 66 serve the town and adjacent sections of Boston. The availability of good transit service, particularly light rail, has enabled much of the denser parts of Brookline to thrive without dedicating a large amount of land to parking.

Brookline is also a highly walkable community with a fine-grained network of short blocks and an extensive network of sidewalks and paths throughout the town. Just about everyone is a pedestrian at some point in his or her travels around town. And while this report is

focused on parking, it is important to consider the pedestrian experience at bus and rail stops, on sidewalks, in crosswalks, and to, from and within parking areas. It is an appropriate goal for the community to facilitate as much walking as is practical, particularly in relation to the Park Once concept referenced above.

The bicycle is a viable and increasingly popular travel mode for many Brookline residents. The bicycle lanes on Harvard Street and Beacon Street are well used throughout the year. Many shopping trips to retail establishments are made by bicycle and the bicycle racks at Trader Joe's and Stop and Shop are often full. The Transportation Board's Bicycle Advisory Committee is actively working to improve bicycling conditions in Brookline through a number of initiatives. Bicycle parking is one such initiative and will continue to be an important component of commercial area parking particularly as bicycle use continues to increase.

## **1.6 Brookline's Environmental Initiatives**

Whether Brookline approaches parking from a transportation perspective or a land-use perspective, the central challenge of the coming decade is to use this resource more efficiently. As a critical link in the transportation infrastructure, parking must be provided in a way that meets residents' legitimate needs for transportation by automobile when other options are unavailable or impractical. But at the same time, it must discourage unnecessary or inefficient car use in order to reduce fossil fuel dependency—whether in response to the town's 2002 Local Action Plan on Climate Change (related to Massachusetts' 2008 commitment to a reduction of 80 percent below 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by 2050), to "peak oil" (the possibly impending time when the maximum rate of petroleum extraction is reached), to our national security interest in reducing dependence on foreign fossil fuels, or simply the near certainty of rising prices.

In recent years, the town has strengthened its commitment to reducing our carbon footprint including establishing the Selectmen's Climate Action Committee and the adoption by town meeting of several resolutions dealing with green measures and carbon reduction.

From a land-use perspective, there is the similar challenge to neither under-build nor over-build parking, and to provide it in the most efficient and functional locations. In the face of both real and perceived needs of residents to manage both traffic and the availability of parking, the regulation of parking must balance predictability and flexibility in order to both permit appropriate economic growth and encourage high-quality development. At the same time, such regulation must help preserve Brookline's unique character while preparing the town—both architecturally and as a matter of urban/suburban design—for the changes the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will bring.

## **1.7 The High Cost of Free Parking**

According to Donald Shoup, Ph.D., author of *The High Cost of Free Parking*, as well as other studies on parking economics, parking costs are incorporated into most everything in our economy. He describes the impact of people expecting parking to be free while there is no such thing. The costs are incorporated into municipal budgets, construction projects, and commercial rents. Requiring too much off-street parking for new construction drives up the price of housing and all development.

He describes outdated and unsupported off-street parking requirements that are often derived from the zoning codes of other cities. No one knows where some of them came from and there appears to be no clear relationship between the parking requirement and the

actual demand for parking. By providing potentially more parking than is needed, the spaces are often free or low cost and people are encouraged to drive.

He asserts that cities mismanage their curb parking. Where parking is metered, the prices are well below the cost of commercial parking rates. Because parking is so inexpensive, people waste time and resources, and create congestion by driving around hunting for curb spaces.

Shoup argues for “performance parking” – charging the right price for curb parking and reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements. He also argues that new revenues should be expended in the neighborhood from which they are generated by paying for added public services on the metered streets.

## **1.8 Parking Finances**

Parking is an important source of municipal revenue. Through meter collection, permits, and enforcement, Brookline collects more than \$7M per year, which represents approximately 3 percent of town revenues. In this context, the pricing of public parking, the enforcement of its regulations, and the overall management of this important resource merits considerable attention.

## **1.9 Context for Parking Reform**

In response to the important developments over the past decade, the BPC believes that the time is ripe to consider the reform of parking policies in Brookline. This applies to both the rules for how much parking we require and the practices by which we manage the parking we already have.

Most of our commercial development, much of our multi-family residential development, and virtually all of our mixed-use development lie within close walking distance of a Green Line stop or along a heavily used bus route. As the Smart Growth movement gains momentum around the United States, communities pursuing transit-oriented development (TOD) as a framework for the future are trying to become more like Brookline.

TOD does not imply an idealized car-free environment. But it does mean that parking can be approached in a more sustainable and affordable way. There can be somewhat less parking, not only because many people use transit but because the mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly nature of our transit districts means some people can walk to work, to the store, or to lunch without using their car or the T. There can also be shared parking, because that same mixed-use character allows people to “park once” for multiple errands, and allows parking spaces that serve 9-5 commuters by day to serve shoppers, diners, or residents at night and on weekends.

Communities that adopt this transit-oriented approach to parking reap a number of benefits by:

- Generating fewer car trips, less traffic, less noise, less air pollution, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reducing congestion and minimizing the number of driveways and vehicles conflicting with pedestrians improves the experience of walking.
- Reducing the required number of costly parking spaces, they help make both housing prices and rents for local businesses a bit more affordable.
- Encouraging more walking in people’s everyday lives, they promote the known public health benefits that come with a more active lifestyle.

- Achieving more attractive buildings and streetscapes.
- Creating a more sustainable community—a greener synergy of transportation, housing, community development, and environmental quality. This is consistent with current national policy initiatives and real estate market trends.

The reason to consider parking reform in Brookline is not to keep people from having cars or make them ride the T. Rather, it is to recognize that many people already make the choice to live or work in a transit-oriented setting and don't collectively need as much parking as we now make them build, buy, or rent. In addition, a better-managed parking system will broaden the array of transportation choices in the community.

## **1.10 Meetings and Work Program**

### **Meetings and Outreach**

The full BPC met 15 times between August 2008 and March 2010. After a few initial meetings to discuss parking management and zoning, four fact-findings teams were established and tasked with developing top issues for further investigation by the full committee or subcommittees to be established. The four teams covered resource management, enforcement and revenue, regulatory framework, and green strategies. The group then identified the following as top issues for further investigation:

- Meter hours and pricing
- 2-hour parking limit
- Parking fines
- Education and promotion of alternatives to the car
- Potential parking reductions near transit
- Parking requirements - minimums and maximums
- The role of transportation access management planning
- Determine if current parking requirements are leading to more spaces than are needed
- Are we maximizing overnight parking use in town owned lots and spaces?
- Is it possible to expand the commercial permit parking program to the areas adjacent to the Longwood Medical Area (LMA)?

### **Subcommittees**

Two subcommittees were then established:

- Parking Resource Management and Enforcement, chaired by Bill Schwartz with Steve Heikin, Hugh Mattison, Hsiu-Lan Chang, Peter Furth, Mike Sandman, Jerry Kampler, with staff support from Kara Brewton, Capt. Gropman, and Todd Kirrane
- Regulatory Framework, chaired by Jesse Mermell with Sean Lynn-Jones, Linda Olson Pehlke, Werner Lohe, Al Raine, Paul Saner, and Myra Trachtenberg, with staff support from Jeff Levine and Kara Brewton

Meeting notes for the committee meetings are posted on the town's website, including two meetings initiated by the business community:

- June 22, 2009 – Coolidge Corner Parking Summit
- February 24, 2010 - St. Mary's Station Parking Meeting

### **Interim Report to Selectmen**

The BPC made a presentation of its interim findings to the Board of Selectmen on October 20, 2009. Committee Co-Chair Bill Schwartz gave the presentation, covering the history and purpose of the committee and the recommendations adopted by the committee thus far. See Attachment A.

### **Final Report**

This final report represents the culmination of an 18-month process. Upon its approval, the results were to be presented to the Selectmen with the recommendations forwarded to the appropriate boards and committees.

## 2 Public Parking Resources

The Town of Brookline provides public parking in off-street parking lots, the Beacon Street median, and curbside parking on public streets. In commercial areas, curbside parking is metered. In other areas, public parking is subject to a two-hour time limit except by permit. Overnight parking is not permitted in Brookline. The town currently has approximately 2,650 metered spaces. In addition to the publicly owned inventory of parking spaces, there are privately owned lots and garages that could be conditionally brought into the inventory available to the public.

### 2.1 Permit Programs

Under authority of the Transportation Board, the Transportation Division offers a variety of parking permits. Those programs in need of modification are accompanied by recommendations below. The others are simply described. Detailed information is available on the Transportation Division [website](#).

#### Residential On-Street Permits

The Brookline Resident Permit Parking (RPP) Program allows a motor vehicle displaying a valid resident permit sticker to be parked in excess of two hours on most residential side streets within a resident's police sector, between 6 a.m. and 2 a.m. The cost is \$25 per permit, renewed annually on July 1.

#### Commercial Area Permits

The Transportation Division sells commercial parking permits to qualified businesses. These businesses are "eligible to receive an employee parking permit that allows parking on a designated residential side street within a ¼ mile of the commercial district. Holders of these permits are guaranteed a parking space on the street." The permit cost is \$500 per year. When the BPC began its work, the permit was renewed annually on July 1<sup>st</sup> and businesses were required to pay \$500 for the permit regardless of the time of purchase.

#### Town-Provided Overnight Resident Parking<sup>2</sup>

Overnight on-street parking is not permitted in Brookline, but the town has 309 public spaces available for overnight use in 11 town-owned parking lots and the Courtyard Marriott Hotel on Webster Street. The current rate is \$100 per month, purchased quarterly. Parking is permitted from 8 p.m. to 9 a.m. on weekdays and Saturdays and all day on Sundays and holidays. To be eligible, the vehicle must be registered in Brookline and excise taxes must be paid. Lease vehicles, company vehicles, and vehicles belonging to full-time students are also included in the program.

Private property owners are permitted by license to rent parking spaces to others who do not live at that address, depending on zoning and Selectmen licensing rules. Off-street spaces typically range in price between \$125 and \$175 per month. Those spaces that are covered, entirely within garages, and available without any time restrictions are priced higher.

During the course of its work, the BPC identified the underutilization of some Town-owned parking lots as a concern. In January 2009, of the 309 monthly spaces available, 79 spaces were not rented, with the majority of these in the Centre Street West lot (34 vacancies) and Babcock Street lot (30 vacancies). One possible explanation for this lower demand is the

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<sup>2</sup> Private parking for residents is discussed in Chapter 3.



availability of 246 town-owned (plus Marriott garage) spaces in the Coolidge Corner area. Another is the inherent inconvenience associated with having to remove one's car from the rental space by 9 a.m. six days per week. To address this, the BPC suggested that the staff advertise the spaces more aggressively.

In part due to the high concentration of town-owned spaces in Coolidge Corner and the limited supply near Washington Square, the BPC looked at the expansion of spaces along the Beacon Street median.

### **Overnight Guest Parking**

Residents may purchase a guest overnight parking pass that will allow a guest to park in a designated parking space reserved by the town for overnight guest parking. A guest overnight parking pass entitles the holder to park in a guest space between the hours of 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. A guest-parking pass does not guarantee the holder that a guest parking space will be available in the lot closest to their residence. The lots where guest overnight parking is permitted are presented in the off-street parking discussion later in this chapter.

Until recently, guest-parking passes were sold in the Police Station only. The multispace meters in the Babcock Street and Kent/Webster Place lot now sell these passes, which are available after 6 p.m. As the town moves to install more multispace meters, purchasing these passes will become easier for users.

### **Recommendations**

**Commercial Parking Permits**—To increase participation in the successful employee-parking program in commercial areas, the BPC recommended that the Transportation Board offer employers the option to purchase on-street commercial parking permits on a quarterly basis with quarterly pricing corresponding to 25 percent of the annual cost. The BPC also recommends that as a condition of obtaining a permit, new businesses should be required to purchase subsidized T passes or employee parking permits.

**Beacon Street Median Overnight Parking**—The BPC recommends that the Transportation Board and the Public Works Department Transportation Division consider renting additional overnight rental parking spaces in the Beacon Street median where such demand exists to address unmet parking demands while not impacting evening parking demand for other uses.

## **2.2 Metered Parking**

The BPC focused primarily on parking in metered spaces, especially in the commercial districts, although we do have recommendations regarding the use of private lots and garages. We reviewed residential parking only as an element in zoning-related parking recommendations (see Chapter 3). Our main focus was on how to make the best use of metered spaces.

### **Off-Street Parking Facilities**

Table 3 summarizes the public off-street parking facilities in Brookline. There are approximately 1,218 off-street spaces in surface lots. In addition, the 138-space Marriott garage on Webster Street offers public parking for up to three hours; its pricing is tied to the price of the metered spaces. The availability of these spaces is not widely promoted, as discussed in the wayfinding section below.

Attachment B provides a full discussion of the type of parking available in the off-street lots, along the Beacon Street median, and in certain curbside spaces. The important point in this

summary is that because some facilities serve more than one user, motorists can be confused about what parking is provided. See facility sign discussion below.

**Table 3 – Off-Street Public Parking Resources in Brookline**

Facility Type	Parking Available									
	Spaces	Senior Center	Guest Overnight	Commercial Daytime	Overnight Permit	Zipcar (Reserved)	Short-Term Meters	Mid-Term Meters	Long-Term Meters	Multi-space Meters
<b>Municipal Lots</b>										
Fuller	50	•	•		•	•		•		
Centre East	143		•		•	•		•		
Centre West	56			•	•					
Babcock	65		•		•	•		•		•
John	14			•	•					
Webster	13		•					•		
School	14				•			•		
Town Hall	43						•			
Kent/Webster Pl	39		•		•					•
Station	44		•	•	•	•		•		
<b>MBTA Stations (off-street spaces)</b>										
Beaconsfield	19								•	
Brookline Hills	7								•	
Brookline Village	26						•			
Longwood	12								•	
<b>Beacon Street Median (off-street spaces)</b>										
West of Washington Square	181		•		•	•		•	•	
E of Wash Sq/W of Cool. Corner	192				•	•		•	•	
E of Coolidge Corner	191					•	•	•		
<b>On-Street Commuter Parking (curbside)</b>										
Chapel near Longwood	22								•	
Brookline near Riverway	53						•		•	
Hammond (north)	8								•	
Washington near Driscoll	13								•	
Harvard near TJ Maxx	13								•	

Public parking is offered in the Marriott Garage at the municipal rate of \$.75/hour for the first three hours.  
 Valet parking for Golden Temple Restaurant is provided on Beacon at Westbourne.  
 Other curbside spaces are not included in this inventory.

## On-Street Parking Facilities

Curbside parking is provided on most public roads throughout Brookline. There is a town-wide two-hour parking limit. This is primarily communicated through a series of signs along the town's boundaries on main roads. A series of permit programs are in place to allow residents to park for longer than two hours in front of their homes, to permit those who work in the town to park on certain streets, and to allow teachers to park near schools. The Transportation Division administers these programs under the direction of the Transportation Board. The management and enforcement of these spaces and permits is discussed later in this chapter.

### 2.1 Wayfinding Signs

Wayfinding consists of signs, pavement markings, and other indications to help people find their way. To determine the quality of wayfinding in Brookline, committee members Bill Schwartz and Steve Heikin conducted a field inventory of parking directional signs (wayfinding) and facility signs in January 2010. They presented the results of their fieldwork at the January meeting of the Parking Committee.

The existing public parking supply is in need of considerable attention with respect to direction (wayfinding) signs. For most public facilities, signs are simply missing. There are no signs on Beacon or Harvard Streets directing motorists to the town's largest public lot (Centre Street East). The Harvard Street signs directing parkers to the Fuller Street lot (See Figure 1) are out of scale with the street (i.e., too large).



Fig. 1 – Oversized wayfinding sign

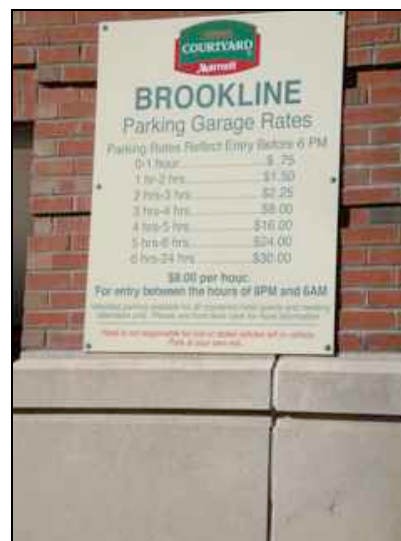


Fig. 2 – Sign on face of Marriott garage

The municipal wayfinding signs that remain in place are the older style off-white signs with a large green "P" and the rest of the word "parking" in smaller letters. Two of the international parking signs are in place using the white "P" on the blue background. Both of these are for private parking facilities, although one, at the Marriott Garage, is intended for short-term public parking at municipal rates, which was a condition of the hotel approval because it was constructed on the former Webster Street municipal parking lot. At present, the only indication that low-cost public parking is provided at the Marriott is the sign on the face of the garage (See Figure 2), which a parker would not see until entering the garage. The sign located on Webster Street itself is a simple white P on a blue background.

## Recommendations

**Wayfinding** – The BPC recommends that town staff install consistent, well designed and strategically located wayfinding signs throughout the town to direct motorists to public parking facilities. In addition, town staff should work with the owners of the Marriott Hotel to add a sign either on private property or public Right-of-Way near the hotel’s driveway entrance indicating that short-term municipal parking is available in the garage.

### 2.2 Facility Signs

The parking facility signs vary considerably. More than 25 years ago, the town installed large circular metal sign structures (see Figure 3) in several of its facilities (Fuller Street, Babcock Street, John Street, Webster Street, School Street, and Kent Street). These signs previously included parking rate information on an interior sign, also circular in shape. All but one (School Street) of these inserts was removed. Current facility signs (Figure 4) are very wordy and uninviting

As discussed in more detail below, people park in public lots and on street for a variety of purposes including short-term parking, commuting on the MBTA, working in a local business, and overnight (guests and monthly renters). A simplified and rational system of easily indicating what type of parking is permitted in public spaces would be beneficial. One approach would be to use a color scheme that is consistently applied to each type of facility. The goal would be to identify parking options to drivers before they park, instead of requiring them to get out of their vehicle and read the fine print, as is the case now.

## Recommendations

**Facility Signs**—The BPC recommends that town staff develop and implement simple, appealing, and consistent facility graphics for its public parking resources



Fig. 3 – Metal sign w/original center sign removed



Fig. 4 – Wordy facility sign

### 2.3 Addressing Overlapping Uses of Public Parking

Some facilities have more than one use such as permit parking during the day and overnight parking while other facilities are restricted to certain uses on days when demand is lower. For example, the Centre Street West lot, which is used for employee permit parking during the week, is underused on Saturdays when retail parking demand tends to be higher.

## **Recommendation**

**Shared Use of Public & Private Parking Lots**—The BPC recommends that town staff identify methods to increase utilization of its public parking lots at times when doing so would not adversely impact other users of the lots. In addition, the BPC recommends that town staff identify ways to maximize the use of private lots open to public use.

## **2.4 Parking Meters and Payment Options**

The town owns 2,650 metered parking spaces in lots, along the curb, and on the Beacon Street median. Spaces in two parking lots (Babcock and Webster Place) are now controlled by multispace meters. At present, payment is by coin or through the Brookline ParkCard, a reprogrammable card that provides a cashless way to pay for parking at the electronic meters operated by the town. The ParkCards are no longer manufactured and the supply of remaining ParkCards is limited.

### **Multispace Parking Meters**

At present, Brookline has multispace parking meters in the Babcock and Webster Place lots. As described previously, guest parking permits are available for any guest parking spaces from these meters. The devices accept coins, currency, and credit cards. Although when first deployed these meters were confusing to some users, the town has improved its informational signs and the devices seem to be effective. While not a new technology, the adoption of multispace meters has become far more common in the region, with devices now in place in the Back Bay and Downtown Boston, and in Somerville, Cambridge, Wellesley, and Waltham. Officials in these cities and elsewhere cite several advantages to the use of multispace meters:

- Credit card acceptance obviates the need for quarters; as many patrons pay for parking with credit cards, the coin collection and processing expenses are lowered
- Meter heads and posts can be removed or the posts can be modified for bicycle parking
- More cars can fit along a run of curb because the spaces do not need to be marked
- Pricing can be variable and can change for special events
- Maintenance is more efficient and less costly
- The presence of a time stamp on the receipt can eliminate disputes over enforcement if documented by those issuing tickets (see below)
- Town staff can wirelessly monitor the devices, which is good for both oversight, maintenance, and data collection

### **Replacement Program for Single Head and Multispace Meters**

In part due to the fact that the ParkCard technology is no longer supported and in part due to the work of the BPC, the town has forged ahead with a proposal to replace all of its meters with upgraded meter heads for curbside locations, some median spaces on Beacon Street, and with multispace meters in some median spaces on Beacon Street and all Town lots. According to the FY 11 Financial Plan,

The proposed funding (\$1.46M) in FY 11 will allow the town to fully implement its meter system replacement plan. In summary, all town lots and major roadways within commercial districts will be fitted with multi-space meters. All other single-space meters will remain, but their mechanisms will be updated. Taking this approach allows for the implementation of a priority of the Selectmen's Parking

Committee: increasing parking rates in the lower-Beacon St. area, from St. Mary's St. to Hawes St., during the baseball season, thereby increasing revenue. In total, approximately 850 single-space meters will be replaced by approximately 100 multi-space meters. This will leave approximately 1,650 single space meters throughout town.

### **Parking Payment System**

As described above, the Brookline ParkCard is an outmoded technology. The town is currently exploring an updated payment system for its meters. One such technology requires cardholders to refill their cards at participating businesses. While the town has not selected a vendor, meetings held with merchants have indicated that such a system would be beneficial.

### **Recommendations**

**Use of Multispace Meters in On-Street High-Demand Locations**—In order to improve the management of curbside parking, the BPC recommends that the Transportation Board and the Public Works Department Transportation Division prioritize the installation of multispace parking meters in certain on-street parking areas of Brookline where parking demand is high and more space turnover is sought.

**Parking Meter Replacement Program**—The BPC endorses the plan to implement the parking meter replacement program as outlined in the FY 2011 Financial Plan.

**Parking Cards**—The BPC recommends that town staff continue to investigate parking card payment systems and select a vendor to oversee a system that is both user-friendly and does not have built-in obsolescence with regards to technology.

## **2.5 Resource Management**

Parking is a scarce resource in most urban areas, and Brookline is no exception. Apart from sections of the Beacon Street median and a handful of other locations where there are 10-hour meters, the vast majority of metered spaces are limited to two- or three-hour parking, whether they are at curbside meters or in off-street lots. Metered parking in those spaces costs \$.75 per hour. This rate is the same or lower than surrounding communities. The price in Cambridge is \$.75-\$1 per hour and \$1 per hour in Somerville. The price is \$1 per hour in most spaces in the commercial areas of Boston. Spaces in municipal lots in Boston and Cambridge are not perfectly comparable with Brookline's lots, since both cities have garages rather than open lots. Cambridge charges \$2 per hour for garage parking.

There is a steep gradient of demand for curbside spaces. Spaces close to stores and restaurants in commercial areas are in high demand, while spaces two blocks away (or even one block away) are often empty. At Transportation Board meetings and other public hearings, both shoppers and merchants repeatedly have emphasized the importance and value of curbside parking directly in front of commercial establishments. Similarly, the demand for spaces varies by time of day and day of the week. The most intense demand in commercial districts is often from 4 to 6 p.m., when people stop to do errands on the way home from work.

Experience in other cities shows that in an ideal situation, 85 percent of our metered spaces would be in use at any one time. Having 15 percent of the spaces open would provide visitors to the commercial districts with the sense that they can find a space, which would increase the number of people who shop in Brookline instead of driving to a suburban store surrounded by a large parking lot.

The benefit to merchants from encouraging more turnover at high demand spaces is that more people will be able to find a space and do an errand, which increases traffic in stores. The benefit to shoppers doing a few errands is obvious. But at the same time, we recognize that a significant portion of the curbside inventory and median should be available for people who spend more than an hour visiting the commercial districts.

## **2.6 Tools to Improve Efficiency of Metered Spaces**

The town has at least eleven tools available to help open up an appropriate number of curbside spaces in commercial districts:

1. The prices we charge
2. The time limits we set on meters
3. The use of signs to inform drivers where there may be available spaces
4. The hours during which meter rates are in effect
5. Differential pricing by time of day and day of the week
6. Differential pricing based on location
7. “Intelligent” meters
8. Parking card systems
9. Flexibility – the willingness and ability to make small adjustments quickly
10. Increased access to privately owned parking
11. Increased use by employees of the commercial parking permit or alternative transportation

The first nine tools are mutually supportive, and we need to use all of them in order to manage the public parking supply in a way that benefits all stakeholders to the maximum attainable extent. The BPC’s recommendations relative to resources management are presented at the end of this section.

### **Meter Pricing**

The differential pricing of metered spaces is a valuable tool if it is judiciously applied. The BPC discussed the merits of using pricing tools along with time limits to achieve more even utilization of spaces just a block or two from high demand locations. These strategies are key components of performance parking and help to promote increased turnover and promote higher utilization of spaces on the fringes of the commercial districts. It would also increase meter revenue.

### **Time Limits**

The second tool we have to encourage turnover is time limits. If we designate some groups of the spaces directly in front of stores as limited to one hour or less, that will encourage turnover at the spaces most desired by people who are doing short errands. At the same time, we may want to increase the time limits for spaces on the Beacon Street median and on blocks that are on the fringes of commercial districts, or for a portion of the Centre street lot. Those spaces will be attractive to people going to restaurants and salons, or a movie for example. And given that they expect to be in the shopping district longer, we anticipate they would have a higher tolerance for walking a block further to have a long-term space.

### **The Hours Meters are in Effect**

Currently metered rates are in effect from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Other jurisdictions have extended meter hours to 8 p.m. and some have gone to 10 p.m., although

none of these are in Boston. The BPC reviewed the merits of this strategy, particularly in the area of St. Mary's Street. Increasing the length meters are in effect along Beacon Street from St. Mary's Street west to St. Paul Street will help solve the problem merchants and residents in the St. Mary's commercial district have 81 times each year, when the Red Sox play at Fenway Park. Restaurants experience a rush of business before each game and afterwards. The crush of Fenway-bound fans tends to discourage Brookline residents from dining in the area, but the net revenue effect on restaurants is probably neutral to mildly positive. However, the effect on other merchants and residents in the district is negative.

Currently someone attending a typical 7 p.m. baseball game can park at 4 p.m., pay the meter fee through 6 p.m. and have free use of the space from 6 p.m. until the game is over. Lengthening the time to 8 p.m. or longer would have two effects. First, it would extract revenue from people going to Fenway and parking on the streets Brookline maintains. Second, if we combine longer hours with higher rates and post signs directing Fenway fans to less expensive meters further west, there is the potential to open up spaces between St. Mary's and Carlton Streets to people who want to park there to visit the stores, especially in the early evening.

### **Flexibility**

As noted above, intelligent meters will give us the flexibility to change meter time limits and change the period during which the meter is in effect. And as we also noted, we can change rates from a central computer.

Differential pricing is one of the keys to managing the parking supply more effectively. Currently, the Transportation Board sets meter rates and then passes its proposal to the Selectmen, who must approve rate changes. If Brookline were going to price meters differentially either by location or by time of day or in parallel to the Red Sox home game schedule, the Transportation Board would need increased authority for pricing meters.

One mechanism for doing this would be for the Selectmen to approve a cap to meter rates and give the Transportation Board authority to set rates at or below that cap. The Selectmen could revoke the authority if rates were adjusted inappropriately.

### **Recommendations**

**Extension of Meter Hours of Operation**—To encourage more space turnover, the BPC recommends that the Transportation Board extend hours of operation for parking meters beyond 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in areas where evening parking demand is highest. Because additional enforcement resources will be needed to implement this time extension effectively, the BPC recommends additional consultation with the Town Administrator's Office and the Police Department.

**Parking Space Turnover**—To encourage more space turnover, the BPC recommends that the Transportation Board modify time limits in some commercial areas to shorter than two hours (where demand is highest) and create even shorter time limits in quick turnover locations such as dry cleaners, banks, etc. In addition, the BPC recommends that the Selectmen establish a ceiling price for hourly parking rates above the current \$0.75 per hour rate, which would permit the Transportation Board to adjust hourly parking rates up or down beneath the ceiling price. Longer time limits should be considered in other areas, where appropriate, including areas in which metered parking hours have been extended beyond 6 p.m.

**Dedication of Parking Revenues to Improvements in Commercial Areas**—The BPC recommends that the Town Administrator's Office, Economic Development Division, and



Public Works Department Transportation Division propose options to use some portion of any increased meter revenues to improve commercial areas.

## **2.7 Parking Near the Longwood Medical Area**

As an outgrowth of the work of the Fact Finding Teams, BPC member Hugh Mattison led an effort to measure the extent of employee parking taking place on the streets adjacent to the Longwood Medical Area (LMA) in Boston. This included field studies of 200 curbside parking spaces on Aspinwall Avenue between Brookline Avenue and Kent Street, Longwood Avenue between Chapel Street and St. Paul Street, and Netherlands Road and Parkway Road. Observations were made on June 18, 2009, at 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3 p.m. In total, 281 cars were observed, leading to an occupancy rate of 46.8 percent on average. Of these, 70 cars were observed more than once, of which eight cars had parking tickets. In addition, of the 70 cars observed more than once, 15 cars were parked in a different location. Only six of the 70 cars were registered in Brookline.

While this study represents a sample of conditions on a single day, the data showed that:

- Curbside parking is generally available on the streets near the LMA during daytime hours
- Cars are parking longer than the two hours permitted by regulation
- More enforcement would lead to more tickets in this area
- Some motorists (most likely LMA employees) are moving their cars to avoid violating the two-hour time limit

The BPC discussed the findings of this research as well as potential strategies to address LMA employee parking. These included shortening the time limit to one-hour, installing meters in more locations, and implementing resident permit parking. In each case, the impacts of the changes such as the need for widespread signs, charging for parking in a residential area, or administrative burdens, were all mentioned as reasons to focus efforts on enforcement of existing rules and regulations.

### **Recommendation**

**Parking Near the Longwood Medical Area**—The BPC recommends that the Brookline Police and Transportation Division continue to monitor parking conditions on the streets near the LMA. Should conditions worsen, staff should report changes to the Transportation Board for further action, including consideration of multispace meters, shorter time limits, and other regulations.

## **2.8 Enforcement**

The goal of parking enforcement is to ensure compliance with rules and regulations, which in turn improves traffic flow, makes intersections safe for vehicles and pedestrians, increases public safety in general, and changes motorist behavior. Parking enforcement is a critical element of the town's parking management program. In addition, parking ticket revenues are an important source of town revenue. Brookline Police are responsible for the enforcement of public parking regulations through its Traffic Division. In addition, Parking Control Officers (PCOs) issue tickets.

### **Recommendations of the Efficiency Initiative Committee**

The Selectmen's Efficiency Initiative Committee Report was published in January 2009 and is available from the town's website ([www.brooklinema.gov](http://www.brooklinema.gov)). The following are the main enforcement -related recommendations.

- **Enforcement:** increase the amount of parking enforcement to generate more revenues through technology advances (hand-held ticketing devices) and more time spent on enforcement
- **Violations:** solicit proposals from private companies to manage parking ticket collections. Will likely result in more revenues but no major cost savings.
- **Unpaid Violations:** reduce the minimum number of tickets outstanding prior to towing vehicle

### **Schedule of Fines and Bus Stop Enforcement**

The Resource Subcommittee of the BPC reviewed the schedule of fines currently in use by the BPC and did not identify any areas of specific change with the exception of incorporating the recently passed violation for parking in bus stops into the parking ticket in use by PCOs.

## **2.9 Administration, Governance, and Public Input**

### **Role of Town Departments**

The Department of Public Works Transportation Division works with the Transportation Board to develop and implement all transportation policies, plans and regulations in the town, including parking. The Police Department oversees the collection of meter revenues and the enforcement of parking regulations. The Traffic Division of the Brookline Police oversees this operation and includes a staff of PCOs who issue tickets and administrative staff who process ticket payments.

### **Transportation Board**

The Transportation Board was established by an act of the Legislature in 1974 and the powers of the Selectmen related to parking, traffic and taxi regulations were delegated to the six-member citizen board, which is appointed by the Selectmen. Members serve for three-year terms. The Transportation Board has authority to set parking regulations, including no-parking restrictions, time limits for both unmetered and metered spaces, and locations of meters. It also has authority to post signs related to both parking and traffic (e.g. stop signs) and it sets regulations for permits programs. The Transportation Board also recommends rates for parking meters and fines. DPW's Transportation Division provides staff support.

### **Board of Selectmen**

With respect to parking, the Board of Selectmen is responsible for issuing snow emergency parking bans, licensing the use of certain parking lots for rental parking, reviewing and approving fee increases recommended by the Transportation Board, and hearing appeals of Transportation Board decisions.

### **Planning Board**

The Planning Board's primary goal is to guide the physical growth and development of the town through the adoption and implementation of a master plan, consideration of zoning by-law amendments, and evaluation and recommendation on land use changes, development projects, commercial signs and facades, and the siting of wireless telecommunication facilities. The Planning Board reviews development projects and makes recommendations regarding potential changes to the parking requirements or dimensional standards that are ultimately decided by the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA).

## **Zoning Board of Appeal**

The ZBA hears and decides appeals, applications for special permits, and petitions for variances in the zoning requirements. Because the zoning bylaw has parking requirements associated with various uses, when variances are sought, the ZBA is the authority for issuing permits.

## **Resource Allocation**

The Town allocates resources for the management of the public parking supply including administration and revenue collection, parking enforcement and collection, and issuance of a variety of permits. In recognition of the strong relationship between consistent enforcement, parking turnover, and municipal revenues, the town has included two additional full-time PCOs in its proposed FY 2011 Budget. The PCO hours would include Saturdays and up to 6 p.m. during the week.

## **Merchant, Commercial Property Owner, Resident, and Town Meeting Input**

When changes to public parking rules and regulations are being considered, the Transportation Division and Transportation Board policy is to notify all commercial and residential property owners and tenants who would be affected by the change. Transportation Board meetings are posted on the Town Calendar, which then triggers notification to the Town Meeting Members via email. For issues that may affect users more than adjacent abutters (such as our main road corridors, commercial areas, bike routes, etc.), notification extends to the Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting Members in affected precincts, the town's Commercial Areas Coordinator, the Brookline Chamber of Commerce, merchants associations and others.

Town meeting is responsible for passing a balanced annual town budget and enacts all town bylaws. An Annual Town Meeting is held in the spring to enact the following year's budget, plus whatever other matters are placed on the Town Meeting Warrant, either by the Selectmen or by citizen petition. The Annual Town Meeting is usually held the last week in May or the first week in June. A Special Town Meeting is held each fall, usually in November, to deal with any budget changes, zoning bylaw amendments (which require a two-thirds vote), or other matters placed on the warrant. See the Town Meeting [page](#) on the town website for more information on Town Meeting and its procedures.

## **Recommendation**

**Commercial Business Notification of Proposed Parking Policy or Management Changes**—In order to ensure that the concerns of commercial businesses are taken into account, the BPC recommends that the Transportation Board and the Public Works Department Transportation Division notify commercial property owners, commercial tenants, and merchants associations in advance of [relevant] proposed actions under consideration.



### 3 Existing Private Parking Resources

As discussed in the report introduction, when establishing the committee, the Selectmen asked for a comprehensive review of what can be done to improve parking further, particularly in the context of several parking-related changes and issues that have arisen over the past ten years. This section focuses on the existing off-street parking supply, the way that off-street parking is regulated and managed, and the available strategies to increase efficient use of available resources in a sustainable manner.

#### 3.1 Off-Street Residential Parking Supply and Demand

Parking that serves residential needs is overwhelmingly in private hands. Many of our residences include some on-site parking. But there are also residential buildings with either no on-site parking or an insufficient supply on site. Excess parking is available at some residential buildings as well as some commercial parking lots that are also used for overnight parking. To help balance supply and demand, and as described previously, many private property owners are permitted to rent parking spaces to others who do not live at that address (subject to zoning and Selectmen licensing).

Because of Brookline's ban on on-street overnight parking, those wishing to park must have an off-street space. The BPC devoted a considerable amount of time discussing whether there is sufficient off-street parking available to meet the overnight demand and whether the requirements for new residential development were appropriate.

#### Field Studies of Overnight Parking Demand

One way to determine the relationship between residential land uses and parking demand is to measure current parking patterns. Because there is no substitute for what can be seen in real-world conditions, Planning Department Staff and BPC members collected field data in multifamily parking lots and garages covering 935 spaces in 20 parking lots in different Brookline neighborhoods. Counts were taken at 5 a.m. in June and July of 2009.<sup>3</sup> Data on each building type and the number of dwelling units was also recorded for each survey site. We counted the number of parked vehicles and recorded license plates in order to match the plates with town data used for excise tax bills.

The field observations, which are summarized in Table 4, showed that occupancy of these spaces ranged from a low of 41 percent to a high of 91 percent. Overall occupancy was 75 percent (i.e. 25 percent of the spaces were unoccupied). The number of available spaces in these lots ranged from a low of 2 spaces to a high of 63 spaces, although this latter number is for a parking lot just across the line in Boston, even though it serves a Brookline building.

A surprising by-product of the field observations showed that by matching license plates to addresses, 56 percent of those cars parked in the multifamily surface lots could be matched to a Brookline tax bill. While some proportion of vehicles with Massachusetts plates list an out-of-state registration (for example, in a lease), these are still mapped/accountable to a Brookline residential address.

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<sup>3</sup> To account for seasonal differences, we visited the sites in October 2009. Occupancy rates were almost identical (less than 5 percent variance at each site).

### Comparisons of Parking Demand and Residential Units

To determine a relationship between the field observations of parking utilization in the 19 parking lots and the residential buildings they serve, Planning Department staff computed an adjusted parking demand. This adjusted value assumed that all of the vehicles present in the observed lot belong to residents at the adjacent address and included any vehicles registered to that address but not observed. In addition, any known spaces that were not viewable (e.g., garage spaces) were assumed to be full. As also shown in Table 4, the adjusted values, which represent a “worst-case” parking demand scenario, resulted in a rate of 1.04 parked cars per unit. There was no variation in the data for proximity to transit (although all sites were within a quarter mile to the T and or located on Harvard or Washington Street bus routes), age of the building, unit size, average number of bedrooms per unit, etc.

**Table 4 – Off-Street Parking Utilization in Multifamily Parking Lots (2009)**

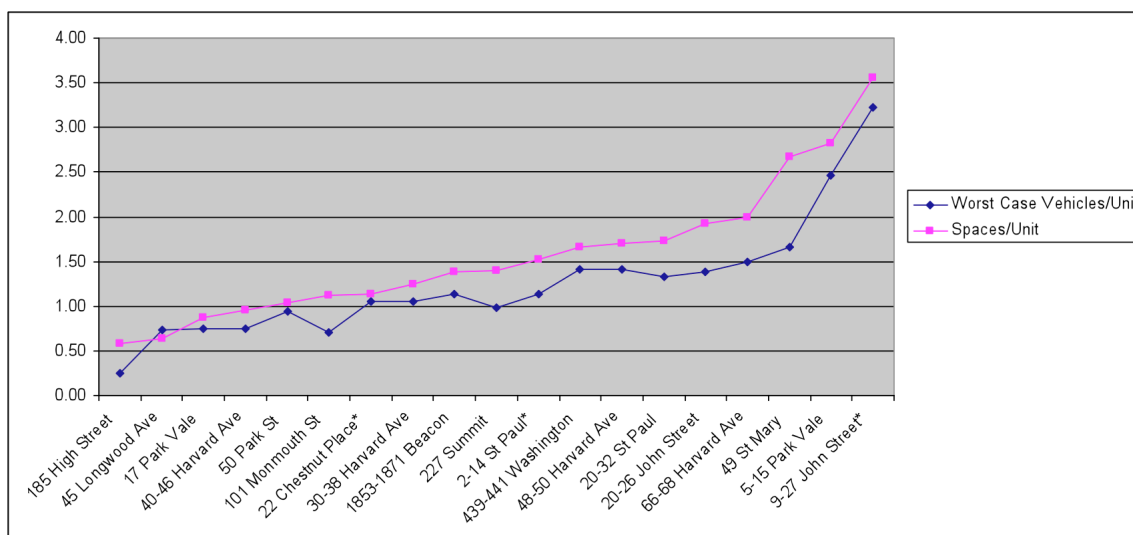
Address	Surface Lots Only			Including Garage Spaces*			Including Excised Cars**		
	Observed			Adjusted			Adjusted		
	Spaces	Parked Cars	Pct. Empty	Spaces	Parked Cars	Pct. Empty	Cars	Units	Cars Unit)
1853-1871 Beacon	50	34	32%	50	34	32%	41	36	1.14
22 Chestnut Place*	82	64	22%	112	94	16%	104	99	1.05
30-38 Harvard Ave	55	46	16%	55	46	16%	46	44	1.05
40-46 Harvard Ave	41	32	22%	41	32	22%	32	43	0.74
48-50 Harvard Ave	41	34	17%	41	34	17%	34	24	1.42
66-68 Harvard Ave	4	2	50%	4	2	50%	3	2	1.50
185 High St	7	3	57%	7	3	57%	3	12	0.25
9-27 John St*	22	19	59%	32	29	9%	29	9	3.22
20-26 John St	25	18	28%	25	18	28%	18	13	1.38
45 Longwood Ave	64	46	28%	64	46	28%	73	100	0.73
101 Monmouth St	168	105	38%	168	105	38%	105	149	0.70
50 Park St	33	30	9%	33	30	9%	30	32	0.94
5-15 Park Vale	48	42	13%	48	42	13%	42	17	2.47
17 Park Vale	27	23	15%	27	23	15%	23	31	0.74
49 St Mary St	8	5	38%	8	5	38%	5	3	1.67
2-14 St Paul St*	64	42	34%	78	56	28%	58	51	1.14
20-32 St Paul St	85	65	24%	85	65	24%	65	49	1.33
227 Summit Ave	59	41	31%	59	41	31%	41	42	0.98
385-397 Washington St	37	33	11%	37	33	11%	33	0	N/A
439-441 Washington St	20	17	25%	20	17	15%	17	12	1.42
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>1.04</b>

\* This includes sites where garage spaces are provided and it could not be determined if the spaces were occupied (22 Chestnut, 9-27 John, and 2-14 St. Paul). All 54 garage spaces were assumed to be full and added to the observed total

\*\* This column includes an adjustment for vehicles registered to the building served by the parking lot/garage according to the excise database. Also included is the commercial parking lot at 385-397 Washington as it is located adjacent to other multifamily buildings that were studied together between Harvard Ave, Washington, and Park Vale.

Another way of looking at this information is the relationship of parking spaces provided and the number of cars observed. Using the same field data, Figure 5 shows the relationship

between the parking spaces provided for the units in the buildings adjacent to the lots studied and the number of adjusted vehicles observed in the field. There is a close correlation between the number of cars parked and the parking provided. In fact, it appears that the more parking is provided, the more cars are parked.



**Figure 5 – Relationship Between Parked Cars and Residential Units (Field Study)**

### Residential Vehicle Ownership and Use Rates

BPC member Linda Olson Pehlke conducted extensive research using 2000 census data, the 2001 National Household Travel Survey, and 2008 vehicle excise data. This research shows that:

- The 2000 Census reported an average of 1.15 vehicles per household
- Multifamily areas (including 2- and 3-family homes) have vehicle ownership values ranging from .56 to 1.41 per household.
- The only households where the average ownership rate is higher than two were households of four persons or more in Chestnut Hill, where mass transit is not as readily available.
- 20 percent of Brookline households own no car. The percentage of non-car households ranges from 3 percent in South Brookline to 34 percent in the census tract surrounding Driscoll School.
- 45 percent of Brookline's working population who commute does so without a car. A significant proportion (in many cases greater than 50 percent) of an average household's other (non-work) daily travel is achieved without a car.

In addition to the work on vehicle ownership, BPC member Linda Olson Pehlke prepared a comprehensive analysis of the 2000 change in parking requirements. This is presented in Attachment C.

### Findings

The BPC finds that the underutilization of overnight spaces in different parts of Brookline is one important indicator that the parking supply exceeds demand in these locations.

The BPC finds that, based upon the field data collected, the relatively low rate of less than one vehicle parked per unit of housing is an important indicator that the per-unit requirements for residential development are too high.

The BPC finds that the data on car ownership and use is consistent with the town's strong transit and pedestrian orientation and that our parking requirements should reflect this orientation.

## **Recommendations**

**Off-Street Parking Requirements**—The BPC supports a reduction in off-street parking requirements within multi-family residential land uses, particularly near transit and in areas served by car sharing organizations, provided that neighborhood concerns are taken into account. The BPC does not recommend a specific number or ratio of parking spaces per unit.

In addition, the BPC recommends that the Zoning Bylaw Committee (ZBC) consider a reduction of minimum parking requirements in M, T, & F districts within proximity to rail stops and bus stops, provided that the ZBC will further deliberate distances and recommended rates.

### **3.2 Off-Street Commercial Parking Supply and Demand**

All of the town's commercial districts feature some off-street parking. These spaces are used for customers, employees, and service vehicles. Unfortunately, because there are also many individual private parking lots, there are considerable inefficiencies on the commercial side of private parking. In addition, the parking needs of commercial land uses vary considerably and involve both short- and long-term parking needs for employees and visitors.

#### **Analysis of Existing Land Uses and Parking in Coolidge Corner**

BPC member Linda Olson Pehlke conducted a thorough analysis of the commercial parking demands in Coolidge Corner using the same study area as for the Coolidge Corner District Transportation Analysis referenced in Chapter 1. She found:

- The publicly available parking supply (curbside meters, off-street public lots, and private lots with customer parking) is roughly 1,300 parking spaces.
- The same district contains approximately 1.5 million square feet of commercial space.
- The land use mix is approximately 65 percent retail and 35 percent office, with a higher retail concentration near Coolidge Corner and more office space (primarily medical office) along Beacon Street.
- The district includes 2 major hotels, 1 independent movie theater, 42 restaurants, 55 national chain stores (28 percent of total) and more than 20 destination retailers.
- The commercial vacancy rate was 4.8 percent in July 2007.
- The public parking supply in comparison to the inventory of commercial spaces translates to a parking supply of 0.86 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- This analysis does not include parking on unmetered residential side streets nor does it include parking in non-public access private lots. The focus of the study was to look at the relationship between the amount of commercial space and the number of public parking spaces serving that space.

This is presented in full detail in Attachment D.

#### **Coolidge Corner Parking Requirements**

Were the commercial space in the study area developed today, the parking requirements would lead to the need for as many as 3,600 spaces, about three times as many spaces as



there are currently available for public use. Coolidge Corner is a thriving commercial district where far less parking is needed, due in large part to the density of surrounding residential areas, the attractiveness of the area for walking and bicycling, the excellent transit service available and the efficiencies gained from park-once public parking serving the entire district. Were it not for the heavy pedestrian traffic along the sidewalks of Beacon and Harvard Streets, landlords would not be able to command such high rents from their tenants.

The fact that the Coolidge Corner commercial district continues to thrive implies that the commercial parking requirements in our Zoning Bylaw are too high. This finding is common to many communities whose parking requirements are based on the typical suburban rates rather than district-specific parking rates. Parking needs have typically been determined from parking demand studies conducted for various land uses in isolated settings, where each trip is destined only to that site and the only means of transport is an automobile. However, what in fact happens in a setting like Coolidge Corner where destinations are clustered together is that people can travel once to the area and make stops at more than one destination, known as “trip chaining”, and do so on foot. In other words, a shopper can accomplish a number of errands, both pre-planned and spontaneous while making only one car trip or by not driving at all. See Attachment E.

### **Brookline Zoning Bylaw and Related Discussions**

As discussed in Chapter 1, off-street parking requirements found in zoning bylaws in most communities are often not entirely based on the actual parking demands for commercial uses. In Brookline, parking requirements are specified for the following categories: residential, public assembly, institution, retail and office (including general office and medical and dental offices, industrial, and warehouse and other. There are numerous additional requirements associated with these uses. Section VI of the Zoning Bylaw is included in Attachment F.

The BPC discussed the off-street parking requirements for both residential and commercial uses at most of the meetings.

- We listened to presentations on the construction projects completed over the past decade, viewed photographs of projects that were built in a way that adversely impacted the urban design of the building and streetscape including large garage openings, overly wide driveways, and paved-over yards.
- We discussed the building at 1285 Beacon Street at the corner of Charles Street, which was required to provide 49 spaces, most of which are not used regularly.
- We compared Brookline’s zoning with that of other communities, including Arlington, Cambridge, Newton, and Somerville.
- We analyzed the potential adjustments to parking requirements for projects near transit, particularly the Green Line stations and along Washington and Harvard Streets. We also discussed the appropriate walking distance from transit station in terms of what to include in a transit-oriented zone for zoning purposes.

### **3.3 Comparisons with Peer Communities**

Table 5 summarizes the off-street parking requirements for three commercial zones in Brookline, Central Square in Cambridge, Davis Square in Somerville, and the City of Newton. Cambridge has minimum and maximum parking requirements, while Brookline, Somerville, and Newton have minimum requirements.

**Table 5 – Comparisons of Commercial Off-Street Parking Requirements**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Brookline</b>			<b>Cambridge Central Sq.</b>		<b>Somerville Davis Sq.</b>	<b>Newton (Citywide)</b>
	<b>Coolidge Corner G-1.75</b>	<b>Gateway East GMR-2.0</b>	<b>JFK Crossing L-1.0</b>				
	Min	Min	Min	Min	Max	Min	Min
<b>Retail</b>							
Ground Floor	1/350	1/350	1/200	1/900	1/600	1/500	1/300
All Other Floors	1/600	1/350	1/400	1/900	1/600	1/1000	plus 1/3 empls
<b>Restaurant</b>	1/5 seats	1/5 seats	1/4 seats	1/15 seats		1/4 seats	1/3 seats
<b>General Office</b>							
Ground Floor	1/350	1/600	1/200	1/1000	1/500	1/575	1/250 if <20,000 sf
All Other Floors	1/600	1/600	1/400	1/1000	1/500	1/575	2/333 if >20,000 sf
<b>Medical Office</b>	1/250 or 3/doctor	1/250 or 3/doctor	1/200 or 3/doctor	1/500	1/330	1/500	1/200 plus 1/3 lab empls
	whichever is greater						

### 3.4 Parking For New Businesses

The BPC learned about the permitting process for businesses wishing to operate in an existing building and discovered that there is a considerable time lag between requesting and receiving a permit as well as a significant cost and administrative burden to both the businesses and the town. The Town has already begun to address ways to streamline this process as a result of the BPC's work.

### 3.5 Overall Findings for Commercial Parking Requirements

**Coolidge Corner Parking Requirements**—The BPC finds that the current parking requirements in Coolidge Corner require more parking than is needed to serve the district.

**Off-Street Parking Requirements**—The BPC finds that uniform application of commercial off-street parking requirements to all areas of Brookline and to all types of developments has proven to be problematic for the following reasons:

- The parking rates themselves are an inaccurate predictor of parking demand.
- Travel and land use patterns differ considerably throughout Brookline, but this is not accounted for in the requirements.
- The travel patterns and mode choice of workers and visitors are not considered nor is the availability of public parking and/or shared parking resources
- There are currently no mechanisms in place to allow for determining parking demand based on local conditions or the specific characteristics of a particular development.
- In most cases, on-site, off-street parking is not feasible, necessary or desirable in our dense, walkable commercial areas. Approximately 68 percent of our commercial properties that are primarily retail or restaurant uses do not have on-site parking.

- On-site private parking is inefficient. Whenever possible, new parking should be public, shared parking in order to maximize its usefulness and minimize the amount of space and resources devoted to parking.

The BPC finds that requiring Special Permit parking relief for even small changes of use or business expansions in our commercial areas discourages commercial land owners from considering new commercial uses and lengthens the average vacancy time between tenants.

### **Recommendations**

**Permit Process for New Businesses in Existing Buildings**—The BPC recommends that the ZBC consider reducing or eliminating altogether the parking requirements for changes in use of existing commercial spaces, with some consideration that the Committee will add restrictions on size.

### **3.6 Brookline Parking Exchange**

The BPC'S assessment of residential parking in Brookline reveals that there is a significant amount of public and private overnight parking available in Town. It is unclear that residents in need of parking are aware of this availability, and as such the BPC discussed the creation of an online "Parking Exchange" so that both public and private parking options can be easily broadcast to the community. It is possible that employee parking could be exchanged in a similar manner.

### **Recommendations**

**Brookline Parking Exchange**—The BPC recommends the establishment of an online "Exchange" to list available parking needs and parking availability (if it has been appropriately licensed by the Town of Brookline, where required) for as many uses as possible. The Exchange would be hosted within the Transportation Division's page of the town's website.



## 4 Future Parking Requirements

### 4.1 Changes to Brookline's Off-Street Parking Requirements

The Regulatory Framework Subcommittee drafted language for a proposed Transit Zoning Overlay District. The final draft version of this document is presented in Attachment G. Although the BPC referred the subject of changing off-street parking requirements to the Zoning Bylaw Committee, *the BPC recommends that the process for determining future commercial parking requirements be changed*. This process is summarized below and presented in further detail in Attachment H.

### 4.2 Proposed Process for Determining Commercial Parking Requirements

BPC Member Linda Olson Pehlke presented a proposed approach to reviewing the parking requirements for building permits depending on the size of the project. This approach was presented to the Regulatory Framework Subcommittee at its February 10, 2010, and was received favorably. Key features include:

- Removal of minimum parking requirements for a commercial change of business or use occurring within an existing structure occupying 5,000 square feet or less.
- Establishment of a fund to accept payments in lieu of new parking in order to use such funds for infrastructure and/or management improvements.
- Collection of payments in lieu of on-site parking for development projects up to 20,000 sq. ft. that are primarily commercial in G, L and O zones, unless it can be demonstrated by the proponent that on-site parking is necessary, feasible and desirable.
- Establishment of a clearly defined process for determining parking calculations and payments depending upon the location and type of project.
- Use and promotion of shared parking (see below)
- Requirements that all projects over a certain size develop and implement a robust and enforceable transportation demand management plan that would reduce vehicle use below an established benchmark

#### Recommendations

**Commercial Parking Requirements for Bicycles**—The BPC supports an increase in the bicycle parking requirements in the existing zoning bylaw.

**Commercial Parking Requirements**—The BPC supports the development of recommendations to modify the process and requirements for commercial parking. This would be applicable both to reuse of existing commercial land uses and redevelopment or development projects.

### 4.3 Shared Parking Strategies

Shared parking may be applied when land uses have different parking demand patterns and are able to use the same parking spaces/areas throughout the day. Shared parking is most effective when these land uses have significantly different peak parking characteristics that vary by time of day, day of week, and/or season of the year. In these situations, shared parking strategies will result in fewer total parking spaces needed when compared to the total number of spaces needed for each land use or business separately.

Land uses often used in specific shared parking arrangements include: office, restaurants, retail, colleges, churches, cinemas, and special event situations. Shared parking is often

inherent in mixed-use developments, which include one or more businesses that are complementary, ancillary, or support other activities.

Public parking lots and/or on-street parking available to patrons of nearby businesses/commercial districts is another form of shared parking

### **Recommendations**

**Shared Parking Ordinance**—Although the Zoning Bylaw currently allows for reduced parking for mixed-use developments, the BPC recommends that the ZBC consider expanding the language to allow for new uses with reduced parking rates that could take advantage of shared use parking resources of nearby properties.

BPC Member Sean Lynn-Jones drafted a memorandum to the BPC regarding the proposed parking requirements. This is presented in Attachment I.

## **5 Conclusion**

This report of the Brookline Parking Committee represents the product of an 18-month study of our parking resources, our system of determining future parking requirements, and ways that we might improve upon both. A series of recommendations are made for consideration by the Board of Selectmen, the Transportation Board, the Zoning Bylaw Committee, and Town Meeting.

There are opportunities to address a number of long-standing issues with the way our existing parking resources are managed and how future development is reviewed. Following these recommendations can help to support commercial businesses, protect residential neighborhoods, and generate much-needed additional revenue. Because no single solution or point of view represents “the” answer, the BPC strongly encourages collective efforts to “get parking right.”